



Hidden money

CEF English language level: B1: Intermediate+

Before Reading - [Short video](#)

Hatsue and Yoshiko are the daughters of a very **wealthy** man. One day they will inherit his fortune. They will pay a very large **tax** bill.

‘It’s not fair,’ their father tells them. ‘It’s your money.’

‘But what can we do?’

‘Take the money out now,’ their father tells them. ‘Then it won’t be there for the taxman when I die.’

So every month the sisters withdraw large sums of money **in cash** out of their father’s bank accounts. They hide the cash where they think the tax authorities will not find it.

Where's the money?

When their father dies there is very little left money in his **bank accounts**.

The sisters only declare a small percentage of the family fortune to the National Tax Agency. They do not mention that they also have 6bn yen (£29m; \$58m) in new bank notes.

The National Tax Agency suspects that something is wrong. They interview the sisters. ‘Your father was a rich man. Where’s all his money?’

‘Dad spent it!’ say the sisters. ‘He left us almost nothing!’

The National Tax Agency continues to investigate. Eventually they go to Hatsue Shimizu's house. And there they discover the missing millions.

‘They hid most of the money in cash in a shed attached to Hatsue's house,’ an Osaka tax official later said. ‘We found 50 cardboard boxes packed with cash.’

I Forgot

When the police find the boxes of bank notes, Hatsue looks surprised: ‘Oh that money!’ she says. ‘I forgot about that. I put it there when I was tidying up the house.’



For some reason the police do accept this explanation. They charge the sisters with the biggest **tax evasion** in Japanese history.

Glossary

Wealthy - rich

Tax - money everyone pays to the government

Cash - physical money: notes, coins etc

Bank accounts - the record of your money

Suspects - believes that something is wrong

Shed - small wooden building in garden

Tax Evasion - to give false information to avoid paying tax



Quick Check: True or false?

1. Hatsue and Yoshiko are sisters
2. They do not want to pay tax to their father
3. They take money out of their father's account without permission.
4. They hide their father's money from the tax authorities
5. The police believe their story

Comprehension

1. Why do the sisters withdraw money from their father's bank accounts?
2. Why do they need this money in cash?
3. Do you think a shed is a good place to hide money? Why?/Why not
4. Why do the tax authorities suspect something is wrong
5. What is the explanation that Hatsue gives the police

Writing

1. Imagine you are one of the sisters. Write your diary for one of the days you hid the money.

Describe

- a) the advice your father has given you
- b) withdrawing the money from the bank
- c) hiding the money in your shed.

[More Strange News Stories](#)